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«GREAT MORAVIAN STATE» — A CONTROVERSY IN CENTRAL EUROPEAN MEDIEVAL STUDIES

Great Moravia as a Central European phenomenon

Great Moravia is a controversial theme within Central European Medieval studies[1]. Rather than being a standard subject of academic research it is a phenomenon that has been a constant in Central European modern political discourse ever since the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. It was there that the Czechoslovak delegation used Great Moravia in its arguments when campaigning for recognition of their new state[2]. The historical legacy of Great Moravia has served to this day as an instrument for cementing the legitimacy of national states in the Central European regions[3], whilst generating some negative responses which are sometimes based on questioning the traditional location of the core of Great Moravia within the territory of the former Czechoslovakia[4].

There are even more paradoxes linked to Great Moravia. Although ever since the end of the 19th century its study has been one of the most important tasks of Czech and Slovak, and partly

[1] *Curta F.* The history and archaeology of Great Moravia: An introduction // Early Medieval Europe. 2009. Vol. 17. P. 238–247.

[2] *Albrecht S.* Geschichte der Großmährenforschung in der Tschechischen Ländern und in der Slowakei. Praha, 2003. S. 61–64.

[3] *Urbanczyk P.* Early state formation in East Central Europe // East Central & Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages / Ed. by F. Curta. Ann Arbor, 2005. P. 139–151.

[4] *Bowlus C.* Franks, Moravians, and Magyars. The Struggle for the Middle Danube, 788–907. Philadelphia, 1995; *Eggers M.* 1) Das Erzbistum des Method: Lage, Wirkung und Nachleben der kirillomethodianischen Mission. München, 1996; 2) «Das Großmährische Reich» — Realität oder Fiktion?: Eine Neuinterpretation der Quellen zur Geschichte des mittleren Donauraumes im 9. Jahrhundert. Stuttgart, 1995.

also Polish and Hungarian, historical research[5], it was long neglected and marginalized by West European medieval studies, which considered Great Moravia to be, in a more favourable light, a «Sonderfall» /special case[6], and in a less favourable light, the «Wilden Osten»/ Wild East[7]. According to the traditional assumptions of Czech historians[8] the first fully developed Slav state arose in Moravia in the 9th century, dominating East Central Europe politically, militarily and culturally. However, from the perspective of Western (mostly German) research, Moravians were one of the many nationalities subjected to the Frankish Empire, within which they became part of the Bavarian Eastern March («Bayerisches Ostland»)[9]. This controversial approach to Great Moravia has been reflected to this day in sources such as Wikipedia where in the Czech version the map of the territorial extent of Great Moravia depicts an empire governing the whole eastern part of Central Europe, while in the German and English versions under the Francia keyword the same area is described as Abhängige Gebiete/Dependent Territories — a mere periphery of the Frankish Empire (see the keyword Fränkisches Reich/ Francia in the German and even the English version of Wikipedia[10]).

The reasons for the different interpretation of one particular historical situation can be seen in the special nature of Great Moravia, which constitutes both a divide between late antiquity and the Middle Ages, and at the same time a boundary between the western (Germanic), eastern (Slav) and nomadic (Avar and Magyar) worlds. For traditional historiography the subject is difficult to approach, partly due to the fact that written sources related to the history of Great Moravia are scarce and the dominant role in its study over the past fifty years has been taken over by archaeology. The situation is not made easier by the fact that the interpretation of the historical significance of Great Moravia continues to be strongly politically exploited[11]. Its existence is even referred to in the preambles of past and current constitutions of some states (The Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic from 1948 and The Constitution of the Slovak Republic from 1992[12]). It goes hand in hand with widespread opinion that Great Moravia laid the foundations from which the present East-Central Europe gradually developed.

However, Great Moravia may on no account be considered a merely local subject. Its existence is connected with some cultural phenomena which are important in a European-wide context, such as the beginning of East European literature, the origin of the Slav alphabet invented to serve the needs of the Byzantine mission led by Cyril and Methodius in Great Moravia[13], or the Christianization of a great part of Europe.

[5] *Albrecht S.* Geschichte der Großmährenforschung. S. 263–283.

[6] *Brather S.* Archaeologie der westlichen Slawen: Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Ostmitteleuropa. 2., überarbeitete und erw. Aufl. Edn. Berlin; New York, 2008. S. 368.

[7] *Wolfram H.* Grenzen und Raüme: Geschichte Österreichs vor seiner Entstehung. Wien, 1995. S. 223.

[8] *Havlík L.* Velká Morava a středoevropští Slované. Praha, 1964. S. 372.

[9] *Wolfram H.* Grenzen und Raüme... S. 315.

[10] Francia // Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia // http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Francia&oldid=483938448 (Last accessed — 20.05.2012); Fränkisches Reich // Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia // http://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Fr%C3%A4nkisches_Reich&oldid=101138783 (Last accessed — 20.05.2012)

[11] *Chorvátová H.* Slovenský spor o Velkou Moravu // Lidové noviny — Orientace. 2008. Č. 21. S. 3.

[12] «We, the Slovak nation, remembering the political and cultural heritage of our ancestors and the hundreds of years of experience of fighting for national existence and our own state, following the Cyrillic-Methodian spiritual heritage and the historical legacy of Great Moravia, based on the natural rights of nations for self-determination [...] we adopt, through our representatives, this constitution» (the preamble of the Slovak Constitution adopted on 3 September 1992).

[13] *Curta F.* Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250. Cambridge; New York, 2006. P. 214–215; *Miklas H.* Glagolitica. Zum Ursprung der slavischen Schriftkultur. Wien, 2000.

An overview of the research into Great Moravian statehood

An excellent overview of the research into Great Moravia until the beginning of the 1990s was presented by the German historian Stefan Albrecht. His work provides a clear conclusion which shows the close correlation between the interest in the Great Moravian issue and the current socio-political situation in Central Europe[14].

In the 19th century it was mostly the Romantic/Catholic fascination in the early history of Moravians, and/or the Pan-Slavic ideas of the perennial contest between Slavhood and Germanhood (František Palacký) which influenced the beginnings of research into Great Moravia. Initially it was conducted mainly by various private associations and enthusiastic amateurs. Soon afterwards, at the end of the 19th century, the philological and historical study of Great Moravia was expanded to include archaeology, which later became the dominant scientific discipline in this field.

Following the establishment of an independent Czechoslovakia in 1918 emphasis was gradually being placed on the link between the new republic and Great Moravia, particularly in relation to the coexistence of the Czechs and the Slovaks. Another aspect of the interpretation emerged after the change in the foreign political situation on the eve of the Second World War. It was the moment when the role of Great Moravia as a mediator between West and East came to the forefront. An alternative explanation for Great Moravia was formulated by nationalist circles in Slovakia, where it was appropriated by the state propaganda at the period of the clerofascist and pro-German state. However, the greatest wave of interest in Great Moravia arrived in the 1950s and 1960s. The period of the first remarkable archaeological discoveries coincided with a radical political coup during which communists acceded to power in the countries of East Central Europe. At that time research into Great Moravia was transferred to an institutional base and became fully professionalized. The state also launched a programme of massive financial support for the research[15]. One of the reasons was an effort to present the Slavs as being culturally sophisticated, in response to the Nazi ideology and its adoration of German, or Germanic, culture and belittling all others. The study of Great Moravia was embedded in the context of Marxist theory and historic materialism[16]. It underlined the feudal character of the Great Moravian state and the class divisions of society at that time. Large-scale excavations of the main Great Moravian centres in Mikulčice, Staré Město and Pohansko were to provide further support for these arguments[17]. They were immense undertakings and the acquired huge amounts of finds and data still have to be properly processed. From the 1970s, when the potential of Great Moravia to feed communist ideology had been largely exhausted, the extensive field activities in the Great Moravian agglomerations were gradually scaled back and the generous state support reduced. Probably as a result of the new approach to Czecho-Slovak federalism[18] the continuity between Great Moravia and what was then Czechoslovakia came to be emphasized (see the title of the proceedings Great Moravia and the Beginnings of

[14] *Albrecht S.* Geschichte der Großmährenforschung. S. 284–296.

[15] The situation was similar, for example, in Poland: *Buko A.* The Archeology of Early Medieval Poland. Discoveries-hypotheses-interpretations. Leiden; Boston, 2008. P. 1–28; *Roslund M.* Guests in the house: Cultural transmission between Slavs and Scandinavians 900 to 1300 A. D. Leiden; Boston, 2007. P. 51–53.

[16] *Graus F.* Dějiny venkovského lidu v Čechách v době předhusitské I. Dějiny venkovského lidu od 10. stol. do první poloviny 13. stol. Praha, 1953. S. 155–158; *Poulík J.* K otázce počátků feudalismu na Moravě // Památky archeologické. 1961. Roč. LII. S. 498–505.

[17] *Poulík J.* K otázce počátků feudalismu na Moravě. S. 498, 503–504.

[18] Constitutional law from 27th October 1968 on the Czechoslovak Federation.

Czechoslovak Statehood)[19]. In liaison with Soviet researchers[20] the thesis about Great Moravia as the first western Slav state[21], with its characteristics placing it somewhere between a western and an eastern type of early feudalism[22], was further elaborated on.

After 1989 the extensive excavation campaigns came to an end on most sites due to the change in the political situation and economic problems. Research continued by concentrating on processing the huge collections of finds. New themes, which the research community had more or less ignored until that time, were being looked at (e. g. the natural environment during the Great Moravian period, the centres and their hinterland, the development of the settlement structure). The scientific community was split in its approach to Great Moravian statehood and its continuity, with the older generations of researchers in particular adhering to the traditional notion of Great Moravia as an early feudal state with a direct line to the later developments in the region[23]. In Slovakia the issue of Great Moravia continued to play an important part in political discourse. Its interpretation once again attained a strong patriotic-nationalistic accent[24].

The idea that Great Moravia was the earliest state (state-like polity) of Central European Slavs, which was a direct predecessor of the statehood of the Czech Přemyslids, the Polish Piasts and the Hungarian Arpáds family, remains very much alive in the Central European region[25]. Current proponents of this idea maintain that it was not a barbarian empire, but a «powerful state» with «developed elements of feudal land tenure and some relationships characteristic of an early feudal state»[26]. Also surviving is the image of Great Moravia as the link between the West and the East (see the title of the proceedings Great Moravia between the East and the West)[27].

However, even within this traditional school of thought there have been some shifts. The originator of the idea of direct continuity between old Moravia and the later Přemyslid Bohemia, D. Třeštík[28], reformulated it by stating that the Great Moravian state disappeared at the beginning of the 10th century together with the Moravian tribe and the imprint it left in history is more of a supranational idea which cannot be appropriated by any of the states existing today[29]. He thus refuted the «evolutionist mythology» of a «perennial» nation which has been developing within a given territory from an early medieval tribe to the present day[30].

[19] *Poulík J.* Předmluva // Velká Morava a počátky československé státnosti / Red. J. Poulík, B. Chropovský. Praha; Bratislava, 1985. S. 5–7; *Třeštík D.* Bořivoj a Svatopluk — vznik českého státu a Velká Morava // Velká Morava a počátky československé státnosti. S. 273–301.

[20] *Санчук Г. Э.* Некоторые итоги и перспективы изучения Великой Моравии // Великая Моравия, ее историческое и культурное значение / Ред. В. Д. Королюк, Г. П. Мельников, Й. Поулик, П. Раткош, Г. Э. Санчук, Б. Хроповский. М., 1985. С. 6–28.

[21] *Poulík J.* Předmluva. P. 5.

[22] *Гавлик Л.* Государство и держава мораван (К вопросу о месте Великой Моравии в политическом и социальном развитии Европы) // Великая Моравия, ее историческое и культурное значение. С. 96–107.

[23] *Ruttkay A.* Großmähren: Anmerkungen zum gegenwärtigen Froschungsstad über die Siedlungs- und sozialökonomischen Strukturen // Origins of Central Europe / Ed. by P. Urbańczyk. Warsaw, 1997. S. 143–170.

[24] *Chorvátová H.* Slovenský spor o Velkou Moravu. S. 3; *Urbanczyk P.* Early state formation in east Central Europe. P. 141.

[25] *Galuška L.* Slované. Doteky předků. Brno, 2004. S. 139.

[26] *Měřínský Z.* České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu II. Praha, 2006. S. 907.

[27] *Staňa Č.* Slovanská Velká Morava — integrální součást raně středověké Evropy // Velká Morava mezi Východem a Západem / Red. L. Galuška, et al. Praha, 2001. S. 365–369.

[28] *Třeštík D.* Bořivoj a Svatopluk — vznik českého státu a Velká Morava. S. 273, 292–293.

[29] *Třeštik D.* 1) Místo Velké Moravy v dějinách. Ke stavu a potřebám bádání o Velké Moravě // ČČH. 1999. Roč. 97. S. 689–727; 2) Mysliti dějiny. Praha; Litomyšl, 1999. S. 163, 172–173.

[30] *Třeštík D.* Mysliti dějiny. S. 104–109.

According to Třeštík, this has no effect on the statement that as early as the 9th century Great Moravian dukes «decided» on a first-ever Slav state[31]. For Třeštík the implementation of this «experiment» is Great Moravia's greatest historical contribution[32].

The weak point of the earlier approaches consists in the fact that the state was taken to be an axiom, the existence of which was not questioned. This conviction may be rooted in Marx's theory of society, according to which a state comes into being at a particular stage of development when society divides into classes and the need arises to secure the rule and ownership by the dominant class[33]. If by this logic Great Moravia is a feudal society, i. e. a class society, a state must therefore also exist by «the law of logic». Schooled in the method of historical materialism, supporters of the existence of a state in Great Moravia were unable to go beyond the given interpretational limits and test alternative options concerning the arrangement of Great Moravian society. It was also for those reasons that at a general level they did not think it necessary to define what an early medieval state looked like[34] and whether Great Moravia met these criteria. If a researcher were to analyse a specific historical phenomenon and its development over an extended period of time, it could happen that he stepped out of the mainstream and classified Great Moravia as a transient or pre-state entity. This is the case of J. Žemlička[35], who examined market organization, and J. Hoffmann[36], who studied medieval towns.

The contemporary line of research examines Great Moravian statehood from a more critical point of view. There is an attempt to understand the essence of Great Moravian society and seek an answer to the question of «how the Moravians became a polity and to what extent Moravian dukes controlled the public space»[37]. Just as with modern European medieval studies[38] it turns to ethnology as well as social and cultural anthropology, where it hopes to find support for its interpretational models and new terminology. One of the first people to take a step in this direction was J. Klápště, who as early as 1994 bemoaned the fact that the adoption of a new approach to the study of Czech and Moravian history had been hindered by strange-sounding anthropological terms and the tradition of Central European historiography. The new methodological points of departure were eventually applied mainly by a young generation of archaeologists who concentrated on the vast Great Moravian agglomerations and attempted to explain the economic and social causes of their rise and fall[39].

[31] *Třeštík D.* Místo Velké Moravy v dějinách... S. 689–727.

[32] *Třeštík D.* Vznik Velké Moravy. Moravané, Čechové a střední Evropa v letech 791–871. Praha, 2001. S. 199–201.

[33] *Hauser M.* Marxova dynamická sociologie // Historická sociologie / Red. J. Šubrt. Plzeň, 2007. S. 39–72, 64.

[34] The lack of an explicit definition of an early medieval state was also a long-term issue in Western Medieval studies, see: *Pohl W.* Staat und Herrschaft im Frühmittelalter: Überlegungen zum Forschungsstand // Staat im frühen Mittelalter / Hrsg. von S. Airlie, W. Pohl, und H. Reimitz. Wien, 2006. S. 9–38, 32.

[35] *Žemlička J.* Entstehung und Entfaltung der Marktorganisation in Böhmen und Mähren // Hausbau und Raumstruktur früher Städte in Ostmitteleuropa. Památky archeologické — Supplementum 6. Praha, 1996. S. 17–27.

[36] *Hoffmann F.* České město ve středověku. Praha, 1992. S. 27.

[37] *Wihoda M.* Morava v době knížecí 906–1197. Praha, 2010.

[38] *Pohl W.* Staat und Herrschaft im Frühmittelalter: Überlegungen zum Forschungsstand. S. 16.

[39] *Macháček J.* 1) Disputes over Great Moravia: Chiefdom or state? The Morava or the Tisza River? // Early Medieval Europe. 2009. Vol. 17. P. 248–267; 2) The rise of medieval towns and states in East Central Europe: Early medieval centres as social and economic systems. Leiden; Boston, 2010; *Štefan I.* Great Moravia, Statehood and Archaeology. The «Decline and Fall» of One Early Medieval Polity // Frühgeschichtliche Zentralorte in Mitteleuropa. Internationale Konferenz und Kolleg der Alexander von Humboldt–Stiftung zum 50. Jahrestag des Beginns archäologischer Ausgrabungen in Pohansko bei Břeclav, 5.–9.10.2009, Břeclav, Tschechische Republik / Hrsg. von J. Macháček und Š. Ungerman. (Studien zur Archäologie Europas/ Bd. 14). Bonn, 2011. S. 333–354.

The Great Moravian state and non-state — current approaches

If we want to provide a plausible answer to the question as to whether Great Moravia was a state or not, we should start from the definition of early medieval statehood («Staatlichkeit»), as formulated by contemporary European medieval studies in the works of such authors as W. Pohl [40] and R. Hodges[41].

According to Pohl[42], the states are invariably long lasting. Neither a change in government nor territorial division can disrupt the continuity of their existence. State power guarantees social stability and protects «public institutions» such as bishoprics, monasteries, towns and villages, which thus attain a permanent nature. The state must also be a functional unit where it is more or less clear who and what belong to it, how it is delimited or arranged. Those belonging to the early medieval state largely identify with this entity, regardless of their ethnic origin. An important role is also played by adherence to a church and a religious community (*ecclesia*), which represents the ideal role model of a shared unity of the realm and its inhabitants. Through religious literature and the activity of the church Christian discourse becomes the «language» of the whole community. For powerful individuals and families the political system of the state provides a framework within which they can fulfil their ambitions and which at the same time regulates their conflicts. These arguments must not lead to the collapse of the state union, although the central power may be weakened as a consequence. The central power led by the ruler must always be able to exploit the available economic, human and military resources. While the role of the ruler is clearly determined by his social status, he must have sufficient scope within its framework for autonomous political action which can lead to success or failure.

In his definition of the state R. Hodges[43] developed the ideas of K. Flannery. According to him, the state is a well-defined political organization. Its leaders are no longer held back by regulatory mechanisms. There is a strong central power consisting of the professional ruling class which is generally immune to the restrictions ensuing from kinship-based relationships. The state is built on the foundations of an efficient and stable hierarchy which must withstand the destructive effect of a whole series of shocks and disturbances. In relation to this the state leader has to attain some attributes of being sacred or he should be inaugurated by specific ceremonies associated with his extraordinary status. The sacredness then becomes an instrument of power (compare, for example, the coronation of medieval kings by important church dignitaries). It is a new concept of society which isolates the leader of the state from the rest of the population on the ideological level as well. The state is an extremely costly form of social organization. Its effective function requires transfers of large energy resources and permanent growth through positive feedback. The state needs an army and bureaucracy, a complete infrastructure which is provided for by an efficient collection of taxes. The only natural economic expression of this system is the market. Only a market allows efficient circulation of energy in society and the existence of a sophisticated infrastructure.

[40] Staat im frühen Mittelalter / Hrsg. von S. Airlie, W. Pohl, und H. Reimitz. Wien, 2006; Der fruhmittelalterliche Staat: Europaeische Perspektiven. Perspektiven / Hrsg. von W. Pohl und V. Wieser. Wien, 2009.

[41] *Hodges R.* Dark Age Economics. London, 1982.

[42] *Pohl W.* Staat und Herrschaft im Frühmittelalter: Überlegungen zum Forschungsstand. S. 36–38.

[43] *Hodges R.* Dark Age Economics. P. 186–193.

If we apply the above definitions we find that Great Moravia fails to meet many of the statehood criteria. First of all, it was neither lasting nor stable. This allegedly «powerful state» irreversibly disappeared after four generations with all of its institutions. Its administration and military power as well as the main centres and most of its elites vanished without replacement. Some continuity, more anticipated than evidenced, is only assumed for the church administration, the skeleton of which may have survived the critical 10th century somewhere on the margins of the former realm[44]. In the centres, however, excavations confirmed a short-lived pagan reaction, which happened in connection with the collapse of the power structures at the beginning of the 10th century[45]. Even before that time Christianity had not yet firmly established itself in Great Moravia. Written sources mention its crude nature (*rudis christianitas*)[46] and at the time of the Byzantine mission of Cyril and Methodius Moravian society was still partly pagan[47], which is also corroborated by excavations[48]. We can even consider the possibility of a form of Christian-pagan syncretism[49]. The church in Moravia was not coherent either as it was being split by prolonged arguments between adherents to Greek-Old Slav and Franco-Latin liturgy[50]. Only with difficulty could it meet the requirement for a common Christian discourse and unity within the Christian community. The territorial extent of Great Moravia and its boundaries are unclear[51]. Many of the annexed territories, which were mostly only formally dependent, became separate again after a short period (Pannonia, Bohemia, Lusatia, Vistulans land)[52]. Between Great Moravia and the Frankish Empire a buffer zone arose, the nature of which was variable and not completely clear[53]. Based on archaeological finds most researchers have no doubts as to the location of the core of Great Moravia in the south-eastern part of today's Czech Republic and in south-western Slovakia[54]. Nevertheless, some written sources make a different interpretation possible[55]. All of the above show that

[44] *Jan L.* Strukturelle Veränderungen — zwischen Altmähren und dem frühpřemyslidischen Staat // Die frühmittelalterliche Elite bei den Völkern des östlichen Mitteleuropas (mit einem speziellem Blick auf die grossmährische problematik) / Red. P. Kouřil. Brno, 2005. S. 19–23.

[45] *Macháček J.* Die heiligen Bezirke in Pohansko bei Břeclav-ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis des Heidentums und des Christentums der mitteleuropäischen Slawen im frühen Mittelalter // Handbuch zur Ausstellung I, Europas Mitte um 1000 / Hrsg. von A. Wieczorek, H.-M. Hinz. Stuttgart, 2000. S. 405–406; *Macháček J., Pleterski A.* Altslawische Kultstrukturen in Phansko bei Břeclav (Tschechische Republik) // Studia mythologica Slavica. 2000. Vol. 3. S. 9–22.

[46] *Wolfram H.* Grenzen und Raume... S. 260.

[47] *Třeštik D.* Vznik Velké Moravy... S. 130.

[48] *Klanica Z.* 1) Mikulčice — Klášteřisko // PA. 1985. Roč. LXXVI. S. 474–539; 2) Náboženství a kult, jejich odraz v archeologických pramenech // Velká Morava a počátky československé státnosti / Red. J. Poulík, B. Chropovský. Praha; Bratislava, 1985. S. 107–139.

[49] *Macháček J.* The rise of medieval towns. P. 451.

[50] *Havlík L.* Velká Morava. S. 256–260.

[51] *Havlík L.* 1) Územní rozsah Velkomoravské říše v době posledních let vlády krále Svatopluka (Svętopьlka) (K problematice vzájemných vztahů středoevropských Slovanů v 9. století) // Slovanské Štúdie. III. Príspevky k medzislovanským vzťahom v československých dejinách. Bratislava, 1960. S. 9–79; 2) Velká Morava. S. 238–241.

[52] *Havlík L.* Velká Morava. S. 270–271.

[53] *Friesinger I.* Historische Nachrichten zur Geschichte der slawischen Befestigunsanlagen von Thunau // Sborník prací filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity. 1992. E. 37. S. 67–72; *Wolfram H.* 1) The Ethno-Political Entities in the Region of the Upper and Middle Danube in the 6th-9th Centries A. D. // Origins of Central Europe / Ed. by P. Urbańczyk. Warsaw, 1997. P. 45–57; 2) Grenzen und Raume... S. 260–261; *Zehetmayer R.* Zur Geschichte des niederösterreichischen Raums im 9. und in der ersten Hälfte des 10. Jahrnunderts // Schicksalsjahr 907. Die Slacht bei Pressburg und das frühmittelalterliche Niederösterreich. Katalog zur Ausstellung des Niederösterreichischen Landesarchivs / Hrsg. von R. Zehetmayer. St. Pölten, 2007. S. 17–30.

[54] *Macháček J.* Disputes over Great Moravia. P. 261–264.

[55] *Bowlus C.* Franks, Moravians, and Magyars. The Struggle for the Middle Danube, 788–907. Philadelphia, 1995; *Eggers M.* 1) Das Erzbistum des Method: Lage, Wirkung und Nachleben der kirillomethodianischen Mission. München,

Great Moravia was not clearly delimited in space and its geographical configuration was fluid. Great Moravia was not primarily organized on a territorial basis as should be the case with states[56], but more likely on the foundation of real or fictitious kinship bonds within the tribal structure[57]. Rostislav and Svatopluk were not rulers of Moravia, but dukes of the tribe/*gens* of Moravians (*Rastizen Margansium Scalvorum ducem*, *Zwentibaldus dux Maravorum*)[58].

Rulers in Great Moravia could not make decisions in a completely autonomous manner. Rostislav and even Svatopluk were appointed to the Moravians by the Franks. Power was not passed from father to son but within a wider kinship (compare the term known from Latin sources: *nepos*). Only towards the end of Great Moravia's existence in 894 did Svatopluk manage to hand over the rule to his son Mojmír II. However, this fanned bitter succession fights and conflicts, which in the end contributed to social collapse[59]. The ruling was shared between the ruler and the other Moravian «dukes»/*optimates*, with whom he made all the important decisions and who thus restricted his independence[60].

The central power was not capable of efficiently exploiting the whole territory as the standard economic instruments — most importantly coins — were lacking. The Moravians did not have their own coinage to use within their economic system and without coins Great Moravian rulers were losing their ability to effectively collect taxes, customs and fines and various other fees, which radically reduced their competitiveness in Europe at that time. In the 9th century having one's own coinage was considered an important symbolic marker of early medieval «Staatlichkeit», and which rulers could use to publicly demonstrate their political authority[61]. Without coins as the «objective measure» it would be difficult for a standard internal market to develop in Great Moravia, as defined by P. Urbańczyk[62], which would enable the efficient circulation of energy in society. The necessary economic resources were gained by the Moravian dukes mostly through intensive military campaigns in neighbouring areas, from where they brought back slaves who they exchanged for luxury goods within long-distance trade[63].

If Great Moravia did not attain the level of an early medieval state, we have to ask how we are to characterize it. According to the classic neo-evolutionary model the emergence of a bureaucracy was preceded by so-called «chiefdom»[64]. Although it is obvious today that the

1996; 2) «Das Großmährische Reich» — Realität oder Fiktion?: Eine Neuinterpretation der Quellen zur Geschichte des mittleren Donauraumes im 9. Jahrhundert. Stuttgart, 1995.

[56] *Tainter J. A.* The collapse of complex societies. Cambridge; New York, 1988. P. 26.

[57] *Třeštík D.* Počátky Přemyslovců. Praha, 1997. S. 293.

[58] Annales Fuldenses 863 a 894 // Magnae Moraviae fontes historici / Red. D. Bartonková, L. Havlík, Z. Masařík, R. Večerka. Brno; Praha, 2008. S. 98, 123.

[59] *Třeštík D.* Pád Velké Moravy // Typologie raně feudálních slovanských států / Red. J. Žemlička. Praha, 1987. S. 27–76.

[60] *Třeštík D.* 1) Počátky Přemyslovců. S. 279; 2) Vznik Velké Moravy... S. 130; *Wihoda M.* Morava v době knížecí. S. 91.

[61] *Garipzanov I.* Coins as symbols of early medieval «Staatlichkeit» // Der frühmittelalterliche Staat: Europaische Perspektiven / Hrsg. von W. Pohl und V. Wieser. Wien, 2009. P. 411–421.

[62] By the term «market» Urbańczyk understands the mass participation of members of a particular community in an economy with systematic rules of exchange, regulated by means of reference to an objective measure of money: *Urbańczyk P.* The Polish discussion on medieval deposits of hack-silver // Historia Archaeologica – RGA-E. 2009. Vol. 70. P. 499–521, 505.

[63] *McCormick M.* Verkehrswege, Handel und Sklaven zwischen Europa und dem Nahen Osten um 900: Von der Geschichtsschreibung zur Archäologie? // Europa im 10. Jahrhundert. Archäologie einer Aufbruchszeit / Hrsg. von J. Henning. Mainz, 2002. S. 171–180.

[64] *Earle T. K.* Chiefdoms in Archaeological and Ethnohistorical Perspective // Annual Review of Anthropology. 1987. Vol. 16. P. 279–308, 279, 286; *Service E. R.* Primitive social organization: An evolutionary perspective. 2nd ed. New York, 1971.

unilinear evolutionary model is simplified and cannot be considered universally applicable, chiefdom is taken to be one of the central theoretical notions for anthropologists and archaeologists who study the social organization of archaic societies[65]. Could Great Moravia have been a chiefdom?

Before we start to discuss this question, it should be pointed out that today's notion of chiefdom has a highly variable content and covers a wide range of stateless societies from Polynesia to Europe, from the Early Neolithic until the present[66]. In Europe this type of social order was dominant in the period before the expansion of the Roman Empire and returned for a short time after its collapse[67]. We cannot make a clear-cut or artificial division between state and non-state formations. The chiefdom reaches a peak where the state begins[68]. The most sophisticated forms of chiefdoms, which can be considered for Great Moravia, are termed complex chiefdoms[69], cyclical chiefdoms[70], or alternatively, early state analogues[71]. We may take it to be an early stage of a state. Many of its characteristics partly coincide with what Claessen and Skalnik call an «early state»[72].

According to E. Service[73], the essence of chiefdom is a hierarchical social unit, which incorporates several tribes. Although there is some social stratification, the whole structure is focused on a single central person — the chief. His power is not unlimited as it is effectively kept within limits by existing social regulators. The economic foundation of the whole system is the principle of redistribution, not market mechanism. There are two primary tendencies acting against each other within this principle. One is represented by the so-called levelling with a negative impact on the accumulation of wealth, disappearing from under the hands of the leaders at various potlatches, rallies, and in relation with costly funerary rituals. An opposite trend is chiefly embodied by the so-called mobilisation, which is the amassing of goods and services for the benefit of the elite strata. The economic development in the chiefdom can be looked upon as a process that progressively leads to gaining control over the levelling mechanisms and the accumulation of wealth through its mobilisation. However, the main production means — land — remains in collective ownership[74]. The mechanisms of redistribution of the resources is controlled by the power centre[75].

[65] *Chabal P., Feinman G., Skalník P.* Beyond States and Empires: Chiefdoms and Informal Politics // Social Evolution and History. 2004. Vol. 3. P. 22–40.

[66] *DeMarrais E., Castillo L. J., Earle T.* Ideology, materialization, and power strategies // Current Anthropology. 1996. Vol. 37. P. 15–31; *Earle T. K.* Chiefdoms in Archaeological and Ethnohistorical Perspective. P. 279–308; *Chabal P., Feinman G., Skalník P.* Beyond States and Empires: Chiefdoms and Informal Politics. P. 22–40.

[67] *Earle T. K.* Chiefdoms in Archaeological and Ethnohistorical Perspective. P. 286; *Hodges R.* Dark Age Economics. P. 14–16.

[68] *Tainter J. A.* The collapse of complex societies. P. 30; *Urbańczyk P.* Changes of Power Structure During the 1st Millennium A. D. in the Northern Part of Central Europe // Origins of Central Europe. P. 39–44.

[69] *Earle T. K.* Chiefdoms in Archaeological and Ethnohistorical Perspective. P. 288.

[70] *Hodges R.* Dark Age Economics. P. 27, 187–188.

[71] *Grinin L. E.* 1) Complex Chiefdom: Precursor of the State or its Analogue? // Social Evolution & History. 2011. Vol. 10. P. 234–273; 2) The Early State and Its Analogues: A Comparative Analysis // The early state, its alternatives and analogues / Ed. by L. E. Grinin, Volgograd, 2004. P. 88–136.

[72] *Claessen H. J. M., Skalník P.* The Early State: Theories and Hypotheses // The Early State / Ed. by H. J. M. Claessen and P. Skalník. The Hague, 1978. P. 3–29, 22.

[73] *Service E. R.* Primitive social organization: An evolutionary perspective.

[74] *Hodges R.* Dark Age Economics. P. 15, 26; *Charvát P.* Náčelnictví či raný stát? // PA. 1989. Roč. LXXX. S. 207–222.

[75] *Urbańczyk P.* The Polish discussion. P. 502.

In the process leading to the establishment of the state R. Hodges[76] assigns great importance to the advanced chiefdom phase which he terms cyclical (*cyclical chiefdoms*). The notion emphasizes a specific transitional condition when the chief temporarily attains the more or less honorary political status of sovereign. The central power is gradually consolidated and takes control over the economic sphere.

The whole system is undergoing a transformation until it reaches a state when the chief has accumulated sufficient wealth necessary to separate himself from the rest of the community. According to R. Hodges, the process which is typical of cyclical chiefdoms is the «mobilisation» of wealth that the chief uses to his advantage in promoting his status and which facilitates the establishment of the ruling elites. The circulation of luxury goods and valuable metals (and items made of them) played a crucial role in establishing power relations. Possession of commodities and their distribution constituted an important element of maintaining one's social status. The leader «invested» his wealth in his followers. The result of such practices was a constant increase in the amount of commodities in circulation and a never-ending spiral of competition[77].

These circumstances also undermine the importance of long-distance trade, which was instrumental in acquiring valuables intended for redistribution within the levelling mechanisms. For the political elites the large-scale trade was not a source of financial profits but rather of rare goods of ostentatious consumption which stressed their status[78].

Societies at the level of a complex or cyclic chiefdom create a specific hierarchical settlement structure[79]. The population is already partly concentrated in urban-like centres. «Lower-ranked settlements are assigned to centres on the basis of proximity, and boundaries are often visible as buffer zones of low settlement density. For purposes of administration, tribute collection, and control, settlements can be expected to cluster towards the centres»[80]. This type of settlement pattern can be characterized as bimodal. In early-medieval East Central Europe it is a pre-state structure, which does not change until the emergence of the state[81]. The characteristics of the archaic model are the concentrating of large fortified agglomerations with a densely populated hinterland into an area which may be considered the core of the early polities. However, this form of territorial organization did not prove to be viable and disappeared during the next (state) phase of development[82]. Later, the whole settlement structure was redesigned on trimodal (or more complex) structure and stabilized, including purpose-built subcentres (e. g. *fora*, *villae forenses*), fulfilling the function of, for example, weekly markets or inns (*tabernae*)[83].

[76] *Hodges R.* Dark Age Economics. P. 187–188.

[77] *Urbańczyk P.* The Polish discussion. P. 502–505.

[78] Ibid. P. 505.

[79] *Earle T. K.* Chiefdoms in Archaeological and Ethnohistorical Perspective. P. 289.

[80] Ibid.

[81] *Lozny L. R.* The Transition to Statehood in Central Europe // The early state, its alternatives and analogues. P. 278–287.

[82] *Kurnatowska Z.* Bildungsprozeß des polnischen Staates und seine Spiegelung in der Besiedlungsstruktur // Interaktionen der mitteleuropäischen Slawen und anderen Ethnika im 6.–10. Jahrhundert / Hrsg. von B. Chropovský. Nitra, 1984. S. 165–172.

[83] *Możdzioch S.* Miejsca centralne Polski wczesnopiastowskiej — organizacja przestrzeni we wczesnym średniowieczu jako źródło poznania systemu społeczno-gospodarczego // Centrum i zaplecze we wczesnośredniowiecznej Europie Środkowej / Red. S. Możdzioch. Wrocław, 1999. S. 21–52; *Žemlička J.* Entstehung und Entfaltung der Marktorganisation in Böhmen und Mähren. S. 17–27.

It is obvious from the above description that the most important criteria when classifying a particular society as a chiefdom are related to the economic system and the specific settlement structure. The economy must be based on redistribution (and not on market mechanisms) to facilitate the mobilisation of wealth in the hands of the leader and, at the same time, the circulation of luxury goods and valuable metals between the chief and his followers. The settlement structure must have bimodal characteristics.

I believe we are able to provide evidence of these substantial markers of chiefdom using archaeological finds from Great Moravia. The redistribution of wealth and its disappearance from under the hands of the leaders can be related to the exceptionally rich grave goods from the graves of Great Moravian elites concentrated largely in the centres, and hence in the proximity of the ruler. Wealth found its way to the graves in the form of ostentatiously decorated weapons, luxurious fabrics or typical Great Moravian jewellery made from precious metals[84]. Jewellery in particular had an exceptional, probably even symbolic meaning in Great Moravian society. Its production was under strict control from the central power[85]. It was the result of the transformation of precious metal which was brought to Great Moravia by long-distance trade[86], military campaigns[87] and as gifts[88]. Coins appeared only sporadically[89] and played no part in the economy of Great Moravia. An internal market in the form of an exchange regulated by means of reference to an objective measure of some money[90] did not develop there either. The hypothesis that the so-called axe-shaped ingots[91] served as a non-coin currency was recently refuted[92]. The absence of coins, which in the context of early medieval Europe served not only to aid foreign and internal exchange, but perhaps primarily for the payment of obligations such as royal taxation and judicial payments[93], testifies to the under-developed, pre-state character of the Great Moravian economy.

Under these circumstances Moravian rulers very likely sought other alternatives of how to mobilise the economic resources intended for redistribution. Apart from the spoils of war

[84] *Dostál B.* Slovanská pohřebiště ze střední doby hradištní na Moravě. Praha, 1966; *Kostelníková M.* Velkomoravský textil v archeologických nálezech na Moravě. Praha, 1973; *Košta J.* Kollektion frühmittelalterlicher Schwerter aus dem grossmährischen Zentrum in Mikulčice // Die frühmittelalterliche Elite bei den Völkern des östlichen Mitteleuropas mit einem speziellen Blick auf die grossmährische Problematik. S. 157–191.

[85] *Galuška L.* Výrobní areál velkomoravských klenotníků ze Starého Města — Uherského hradiště // PA. 1989. Roč. LXXX. S. 405–451; *Macháček J., Gregorová M., Hložek M., Hošek J.* Raně středověká kovodělná výroba na Pohansku u Břeclavi // PA. 2007. Roč. XCVIII. S. 129–184.

[86] *Poláček L.* Der mährische Handel // Europas Mitte um 1000. Beiträge zur Geschichte, Kunst und Archäologie. Bd. I / Hrsg. von A. Wieczorek, et al. Stuttgart, 2000. S. 146–147.

[87] *Ruttkay A.* Odraz politicko-spoločenského vývoje vo veľkomoravskom vojenstve a výzbroji // Slovensko vo včasnom stredoveku / Red. A. Ruttkay, et al. Nitra, 2002. S. 105–121.

[88] *Curta F.* The Amber Trail in early medieval Eastern Europe // Paradigms and Methods in Early Medieval Studies / Ed. by F. Lifshitz and C. Chazelle. New York, 2007. P. 61–79.

[89] *Kučerovská T.* 1) Archeologické nálezy k vývoji peněžní směny ve velkomoravské říši // Numizmatiský sborník. 1989. Roč. 18. S. 19–54; 2) Münzfunde aus Mikulčice // Studien zum Burgwall von Mikulčice. Bd. 3 / Hrsg. von L. Poláček. Brno, 1998. S. 151–170.

[90] *Štefan I.* Great Moravia, Statehood and Archaeology... P. 343; *Urbańczyk P.* The Polish discussion... P. 505.

[91] *Kučerovská T.* 1) Archeologické nálezy k vývoji peněžní směny ve velkomoravské říši. S. 19–54; 2) Die Zahlungsmittel in Mähren im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert // Rapports du IIIe Congrès international d'archéologie slave. Bratislava 7–14 septembre 1975. Vol. 2 / Ed. par B. Chropovský. Bratislava, 1980. P. 211–229.

[92] *Curta F.* New Remarks on Early Medieval Hoards of Iron Implements and Weapons // Frühgeschichtliche Zentralorte in Mitteleuropa. S. 309–332; *Štefan I.* Great Moravia, Statehood and Archaeology. P. 343.

[93] *Yorke B.* The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms 600–900 and the beginnings of the Old English state // Der frühmittelalterliche Staat: Europaische Perspektiven. S. 73–86, 80.

it was mostly long-distance trade that could be taken into account. A question that remains open is what commodities could the Moravians have offered in exchange for weapons, luxurious fabrics and precious metals, provided that such goods found their way to central places by means of long-distance trade. It is possible that one of the most desirable goods leaving Moravia for Spain across the Alps and through Venice and the Near East were slaves[94]. In addition, the Moravians may have exported horses, wax and honey[95]. Unfortunately, none of those commodities is visible archaeologically[96].

An important role in long-distance trade was played by extensive settlement agglomerations[97], one of which could very likely have been the market of the Moravians mentioned in Frankish and Arabic sources[98]. It was to this place, «*ad mercantum Marahorum*», that Bavarian merchants, Jewish *Radaniya* and Venetians travelled to exchange rare and luxurious goods for slaves captured by the Moravians during their forays into the territories of their pagan neighbours. These places became the redistribution centres of Great Moravia[99].

Written reports of Great Moravian centres are found mainly in the imperial annals, such as the *Annals of Fulda* or the *Annals of St. Bertin* which mention, for example, *urbs antiqua Rastizi* or *ineffabilis Rastizi munitio*[100]. The term *civitas* describes, for example, Dowina, situated at the confluence of the Danube with the Morava river[101], or places temporarily taken by Engelschalk and William, two commanders of the Bavarian duke Karlomann (*duces Karlmanni*) during an episodic East-Frankish occupation of Moravia[102].

Only rarely can we identify the settlements mentioned in the Frankish annals with specific places: Dowina is modern-day Devín[103] and Neutra is Nitra[104] in Slovakia. Although the majority eludes localization and they remain nameless, we assume they refer to some of the rich archaeological sites explored by archaeologists over the last fifty years in the

[94] *McCormick M.* 1) Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce AD 300–900. Cambridge, 2001. P. 691, 767, 774; 2) Verkehrswege, Handel und Sklaven zwischen Europa und dem Nahen Osten um 900: Von der Geschichtsschreibung zur Archäologie? S. 171–180; *Třeštík D.* Veliké město Slovanů Praha. Státy a otroci ve střední Evropě v 10. století // Přemyslovský stát kolem roku 1000 / Red. L. Polanský, et al. Praha, 2000. S. 49–70; *Verhulst A.* The Carolingian Economy. Cambridge, 2002. P. 107, 112.

[95] See, e. g.: *Poláček L.* Der mährische Handel. S. 146–147; *Warnke C.* Der Handel mit Wachs zwischen Ost- und Westeuropa im frühen und hohen Mittelalter // Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa. Teil IV / Hrsg. von K. Düwel, et al. Göttingen, 1987. S. 545–569.

[96] More on slaves see, e. g.: *Henning J.* Gefangenenfesseln im slawischen Siedlungsraum un der europäische Sklavenhandel im 6. bis 12. Jahrhundert // Germania. 1992. Bd. 70. S. 403–426. See a critical evaluation: *Galuška L.* O otrocích na Velké Moravě a okovech ze Starého Města // Dějiny ve věku nejistot. Sborník k příležitosti 70. narozenin Dušana Třeštíka / Red. J. Klápště, et al. Praha, 2003. S. 75–86.

[97] *Wihoda M.* Morava v době knížecí. P. 92–93.

[98] *Třeštík D.* 1) «Trh Moravanů» — ústřední trh Staré Moravy // ČČH. 1973. Roč. 21. S. 869–894; 2) Veliké město Slovanů Praha… S. 52–53.

[99] *Štefan I.* Great Moravia, Statehood and Archaeology… P. 343.

[100] *Bowlus C.* Franks, Moravians, and Magyars... P. 161, 173–174, 185; *Goldberg E. J.* Struggle for empire: Kingship and conflict under Louis the German, 817–876. Ithaca; New York, 2006. P. 244, 284, 309.

[101] *Goldberg E. J.* Struggle for empire... P. 273.

[102] Ibid. P. 309.

[103] *Plachá V., Hlavicová J., Keller I.* Slovanský Devín. Bratislava, 1990.

[104] *Fusek G.* Die Nebenareale in der Struktur der großmährischen Burgstadt von Nitra // Burg — Vorburg — Suburbium: Zur Problematik der Nebenareale frühmittelalterlicher Zentren / Hrsg. von I. Boháčová, L. Poláček. Brno, 2008. S. 271–290.

Czech Republic. The most important ones are Mikulčice[105], Staré Město[106] and Pohansko near Břeclav[107].

A well-documented, published example of a Great Moravian central place is the last of the sites listed above. The early medieval agglomeration at Pohansko near Břeclav had an area of around 60 ha, two suburbs and a massively fortified central section. It was built in 9th century following a unified urban planning concept on the place of an earlier agricultural settlement[108]. It lies in a strategic location where Moravia was entered both by foreign armies and merchants. Its task was military protection as well as the control and management of long-distance trade. At the same time it concentrated professional craft production. A site of this type could have only been built by somebody with the highest authority in the country, i.e. the ruler. He also had one of his residences there, which he had built on the model of the palatium of the Carolingian Pfalz[109].

The reasons which led the Moravian ruler to the massive investment into the vast agglomeration at Pohansko ensued from his efforts to achieve personal independence. A logical consequence of this development is the emergence of the trade centres, fortifications and separate royal residences. At Pohansko the three functions are integrated into a single whole. It is therefore simultaneously the *munitio*, *emporium* and *palatium* of the Moravian rulers[110].

By its characteristics it corresponded to a great extent to Viking and Anglo-Saxon type B emporia as defined by R. Hodges[111]. Their existence is related to a greater emphasis on independent traders, controlled from afar by the ruler, who wanted to increases the import of prestigious and specific utility goods. The sites sprang up suddenly thanks to massive investment by the king or a similar authority who tried to gain control over local production and distribution in this way[112]. A significant role in this development is certain to have been played by the rivalry between kings and traditional family aristocracy. They were clearly permanently lived in settlements of the urban type. They are distinguishable by the street arrangement of the built up area constructed to a plan in a pre-defined network, superimposed over the previous cluster settlement structure. An example is Viking Löddeköpinge, Hedeby or the Anglo-Saxon Hamwic and Frisian Dorestad. It seems that, in the emporia, the buildings were allocated too much space and covered an unusually large area, especially when compared to later medieval standards. The sites of this type were 40 to 50 times larger than the other sites

[105] *Poláček L.* 1) Great Moravia, the power centre at Mikulčice and the issue of the socioeconomic structure // Studien zum Burgwall von Mikulčice. Bd. 8 / Hrsg. von L. Poláček. Brno, 2008. S. 11–44; 2) Ninth-century Mikulcice: The «market of the Moravians»? The archaeological evidence of trade in Great Moravia // Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium. Vol. I: The Heirs of the Roman West / Ed. by J. Henning. Berlin, 2007. P. 499–524.

[106] *Galuška L.* 1) Die großmährische Siedlungsagglomeration von Staré Město-Uherské Hradiště (Mähren): Uherské Hradiště-Sady, Kirchenkomplex und Erzbischofsitz // Die frühmittelalterlichen Wandmalereien Mährens und der Slowakei. Archäologischer Kontext und herstellungstechnologische Analyse / Hrsg. von M. Pippal und F. Daim. Innsbruck, 2008. S. 47–62; 2) Early Medieval Agglomeration Staré Město-Uherské Hradiště — Great Moravian Veligrad // Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae. 2008. Vol. 13. P. 45–61; 3) Staré Město und Uherské Hradiště — von der frühslawischen Siedlung zur zentralen großmährischen Machtagglomeration Veligrad // Frühgeschichtliche Zentralorte in Mitteleuropa. S. 245–257.

[107] *Macháček J.* The rise of medieval towns.

[108] Ibid. P. 37–55, 473–538.

[109] *Macháček J.* Palatium der mährischen Herrscher in Pohansko bei Břeclav // Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae. 2008. Vol. 13. P. 107–125.

[110] *Macháček J.* Early medieval centre in Pohansko near Břeclav/Lundeburg: *Munitio*, *emporium* or *palatium* of the rulers of Moravia? // Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium. Vol. 1: The Heirs of the Roman West. P. 473–498.

[111] *Hodges R.* 1) Dark Age Economics. P. 50–56; 2) Towns and Trade in the Age of Charlemange. London, 2000.

[112] *Yorke B.* The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms... P. 79–80.

in the settlement hierarchy. The population of the sites was up to ten times higher compared to the contemporary rural settlements. Type B emporia often took up an extremely large area in the range between 12 to 100 ha. According to R. Hodges, type B emporia can be associated with cyclical chiefdoms and endeavours to mobilize wealth.

The vast early medieval agglomeration at Pohansko could not have existed self-sufficiently without an agricultural hinterland. The existence of the large concentration of population within the stronghold was apparently made possible by a system of smaller settlements. A settlement structure fully subordinated to the needs of the centre was established in the 9th century in the immediate surroundings of Pohansko. The settlements supplied the stronghold with food, mainly grain crops. Based on the current state of research, agricultural settlements clustered in the hinterland of important Great Moravian centres. In the case of Pohansko near Břeclav it is obvious that the contemporary agricultural settlements were not randomly located in its environs. The peripheral areas on the interface between the hinterlands of two neighbouring centres remained only sporadically settled. They were probably de-populated due to the dislocation of the population which provided for the needs of the centre (in addition to producing the fundamental foodstuffs probably the construction and maintenance of the road and fortification systems as well)[113]. It is a typical bimodal settlement pattern (centre — hinterland), which is characteristic of pre-state societies (see above).

The pre-state characteristics of Great Moravian society are also related to its fall. As a result of the redistributive nature of its economy, the central power was critically dependent on long-distance trade, which brought objects of prestige into the country, with which the rulers would buy the loyalty of their supporters. An interruption of the trade routes was unavoidably accompanied by massive turbulence in the social system as a whole. In Great Moravia this situation occurred around 900 when Central Europe came under the control of the newly arriving Hungarians[114]. Although it was not just the breakdown of long-distance trade which led to the collapse of Great Moravia[115], this cause can be considered to be one of the most important.

Conclusion

Great Moravia did not attain the level of early medieval statehood. The characteristics of its economy, social and settlement structures correspond more readily with chiefdom in its most developed form. Does this give us ground to consider Great Moravia to be something extraordinary and different in contemporary Europe? The opposite is true. A similar stage of development was reached by other societies situated beyond the boundaries of the Frankish Empire. A good example is the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms (600 to 900 AD), which «were probably at best "proto-states" rather than states»[116]. The situation was similar with Scandinavian kingdoms[117]. The Celtic world (especially Wales and Ireland) was, in terms of the development of statehood, even more significantly delayed compared to Central

[113] *Dresler P., Macháček J.* The hinterland of an Early Mediaeval centre at Pohansko near Břeclav // Das wirtschäftliche Hinterland der frühmittelalterlichen Zentren. Internationale Tagungen in Mikulčice VI / Hrsg. von L. Poláček. Brno, 2008. S. 313–325.

[114] *Štefan I.* Great Moravia, Statehood and Archaeology... P. 347; *Wihoda M.* Morava v době knížecí. P. 93.

[115] *Macháček J.* The rise of medieval towns... P. 431–471.

[116] *Yorke B.* The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. P. 85.

[117] *Bagge S.* Early state formation in Scandinavia // Der frühmittelalterliche Staat: Europaische Perspektiven. S. 145–154.

Europe[118]. In general it can be stated that the polities of the northern world (England, Wales, Ireland, and Denmark) are seen as pre-state systems — tribal society in which warfare and tribute were more important than taxation and exploitation of landed resources and where royal centrality was for a long time much more ad hoc, much more personal[119].

The position of the rulers in early medieval Moravia could be best compared to Offa in Mercia, Ine in Wessex or Godfred in Denmark. In a similar way, the Moravian Mojmír family attempted, by massive investment in agglomerations of the Pohansko type, to gain economic control over society, neutralize the equalizing mechanisms, mobilize wealth and separate themselves form the rest of the community. However, the fruit of their effort was not the origin of a state, reminiscent of the Wessex of Alfred the Great or the Denmark of Harald I Bluetooth, but the fall of the «Great Moravian empire».

If today we describe Great Moravia as a state, then we have to be aware that we are consciously participating in the political manipulation of history and the construction of a national or Central European mythology concerning «dukes from mighty castles on the Morava river», who at the very beginning of the 9th century «decided in favour of a state». This will have nothing to do with reality and we will veer off the modern stream of European medieval studies, which abandons rigid ideological dogmas and applies new procedures, which help us better understand the function of early medieval societies.

Резюме

В исследованиях центрально-европейского Средневековья Великая Моравия является дискуссионной темой. Не являясь при этом лишь объектом академического интереса, она — со времен Парижской мирной конференции 1919 г. — постоянно присутствует в современном политическом дискурсе Центральной Европы. Хотя уже с конца XIX в. изучение Великой Моравии стало одной из важных задач чешской и словацкой, а отчасти также польской и венгерской медиевистики, западноевропейская историография в течение долгого времени не уделяла внимания данной теме или маргинализировала ее, рассматривая Великую Моравию в лучшем случае как «особый случай» (*Sonderfall*), а в худшем — как своего рода «Дикий Восток» (*Wilden Osten*). Причины различной интерпретации данного исторического феномена можно усматривать в специфической природе Великой Моравии, которая представляла собой не только водораздел между Античностью и Средневековьем, но и в то же самое время границу между западным (германским), восточным (славянским) и кочевническим (аварским и мадьярским) мирами. Для традиционной историографии подступиться к этой теме было трудно отчасти и потому, что письменные источники, относящиеся к истории Великой Моравии, скудны, и доминирующую роль в ее изучении в течение последних пятидесяти лет играла археология. Не способствовал улучшению ситуации и тот факт, что интерпретация исторического значения Великой Моравии продолжала быть сильно политизированной. Ссылки на Великую Моравию содержались даже в преамбулах старых и новых конституций некоторых государств. Все это шло рука об руку с широко распространенным представлением о том, что Великая Моравия заложила те основы, из которых

[118] *Davies W.* States and non-states in the Celtic world // Der frühmittelalterliche Staat: Europaische Perspektiven. S. 155–170.

[119] *Wickham C.* Framing the early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400–800. Oxford; New York, 2005. P. 56, 339–351.

постепенно произросла современная Центрально-Восточная Европа. В то же время Великая Моравия ни в коем случае не может рассматриваться как сугубо локальная тема. Ее существование связано с рядом культурных явлений, имеющих важное значение в общеевропейском контексте, таких как зарождение восточноевропейской книжности, появление славянской азбуки, созданной для нужд византийской миссии Свв. Кирилла и Мефодия, или христианизация значительного пространства Европы.

В Центральной Европе до сих пор жива идея, согласно которой Великая Моравия была древнейшим славянским государством в этом регионе, прямым предшественником государств чешских Пржемысловичей, польских Пястов и венгерских Арпадов. Современные сторонники этой идеи утверждают, что Великая Моравия была не варварской державой, а «мощным государством» с «развитыми элементами феодального землевладения и некоторыми отношениями, характерными для раннефеодального государства». Сохраняется также и образ Великой Моравии как связующего звена между Западом и Востоком.

Слабое место прежних подходов к изучению Великой Моравии заключается в том, что государство принималось за аксиому и его существование не ставилось под сомнение. Это убеждение, возможно, коренилось в марксистской теории, согласно которой государство возникает на определенном этапе развития, когда общество разделяется на классы и возникает потребность обеспечить власть и собственность господствующего класса. Если в соответствии с этой логикой Великая Моравия объявлялась феодальным, то есть классовым, обществом, то, «по закону логики», здесь должно было поэтому существовать и государство. Воспитанные на методе исторического материализма, сторонники существования государственности в Великой Моравии были не в состоянии выйти за рамки указанных интерпретационных рамок и проверить альтернативные модели устройства великоморавского общества.

В современных исследованиях обозначилась линия, рассматривающая великоморавскую государственность с более критических позиций. Так же как это происходит с современной европейской медиевистикой в целом, эти исследования обращаются к этнологии, равно как и к социальной и культурной антропологии, где они надеются найти поддержку в том, что касается интерпретационных моделей и новой терминологии.

Если мы хотим найти удовлетворительный ответ на вопрос, была ли Великая Моравия государством или нет, мы должны начать с определения раннесредневековой государственности (*Staatlichkeit*) в том виде, в каком оно формулируется в современной медиевистике. Обратившись к этим формулировкам, мы обнаружим, что Великая Моравия не соответствует многим из критериев государственности. Прежде всего, ее существование не было ни продолжительным, ни стабильным. Лишь с трудом могла она соответствовать требованию общего христианского дискурса и единства, необходимого для христианского общества. Территориальный охват Великой Моравии и ее границы неясны. Все это показывает, что Великая Моравия не была ясно очерчена в пространстве и ее географическая конфигурация была размытой. Великая Моравия была организована не столько на территориальной основе, как это должно быть в случае с государствами, сколько на основе реальных или фиктивных родственных связей в рамках племенной структуры. Центральная власть не была в состоянии эффективно эксплуатировать территорию страны, так как для этого недоставало стандартных экономических инструментов, в первую очередь — монетной системы.

Если Великая Моравия не достигла уровня раннесредневекового государства, то нам необходимо задаться вопросом, как ее следует характеризовать. Согласно классической неоэволюционистской модели, возникновению бюрократического аппарата предшествовала стадия так называемого «вождества». Наиболее развитые формы вождеств, которые могут быть приложимы к Великой Моравии, именуются сложными вождествами, циклическими вождествами, а иногда, с противоположных позиций, даже трактуются как «ранние государства».

Великая Моравия не достигла уровня раннесредневековой государственности. Характерные черты ее экономики, социальных и поселенческих структур более соответствуют вождеству в его наиболее развитой форме. Дает ли данный вывод основание считать Великую Моравию чем-то экстраординарным, отличным от других обществ раннесредневековой Европы? Определенно нет. На схожей стадии развития находились многие другие общества, располагавшиеся вне границ империи Каролингов (англо-саксонские, скандинавские, кельтские королевства).

Перевод с английского Д. Е. Алимова

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Название: «Great Moravian State» — a controversy in Central European medieval studies [«Великоморавское государство» — дискуссионная тема в исследованиях центрально-европейского Средневековья]

Резюме: В исследованиях центрально-европейского Средневековья Великая Моравия является дискуссионной темой. Не являясь при этом лишь объектом академического интереса, она — со времен Парижской мирной конференции 1919 г. — постоянно присутствует в современном политическом дискурсе Центральной Европы. В Центральной Европе до сих пор жива идея, согласно которой Великая Моравия была древнейшим славянским государством в этом регионе, прямым предшественником государств чешских Пржемысловичей, польских Пястов и венгерских Арпадов. Слабое место прежних подходов к изучению Великой Моравии заключается в том, что государство принималось за аксиому и его существование не ставилось под сомнение. В современных исследованиях обозначилась линия, рассматривающая великоморавскую государственность с более критических позиций. Так же как это происходит с современной европейской медиевистикой в целом, эти исследования обращаются к этнологии, равно как и к социальной и культурной антропологии, где они надеются найти поддержку в том, что касается интерпретационных моделей и новой терминологии.

Ключевые слова: Великая Моравия, археология, раннесредневековая государственность, раннее государство, вождество

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Title: «Great Moravian State» — a controversy in Central European medieval studies

Summary: Great Moravia is a controversial theme within Central European Medieval studies. Rather than being a standard subject of academic research it is a phenomenon that has been a constant in Central European modern political discourse. The idea that Great Moravia was the earliest state of Central European Slavs, which was a direct predecessor of the statehood of the Czech Přemyslids, the Polish Piasts and the Hungarian Arpáds family, remains very much alive in the Central European region. The weak point of the

earlier approaches consists in the fact that the state was taken to be an axiom, the existence of which was not questioned. The contemporary line of research examines Great Moravian statehood from a more critical point of view. Just as with modern European medieval studies it turns to ethnology as well as social and cultural anthropology, where it hopes to find support for its interpretational models and new terminology.

Keywords: Great Moravia, archaeology, early medieval statehood, early state, chiefdom

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